11: Boyd H-4, 5 (1953) 1958
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DISCUSSION

539 Tarascan legends may be examined from many viewpoints, including those of history, ethnology, psychology, and literature. Probably the most important consideration is the basic function they fulfill for the Tarascans—a function so significant that the legends have survived to the present. Only a brief analysis of these factors can be made in this study.

539 173 174 [167] As orally transmitted history they leave much to be desired, but they contain usable references which support other data. While one may doubt that the Tarascans originated in South America, as suggested in "Just as the Birds," migration myths are fairly common in the folklore of Indians of the Americas. To some extent they probably indicate dim memories of tribal migrations.

539 796 782 [727] The reference in the legend of Lake Cuitzeo to the placing of the warrior's heart in the temple as an offering to the sun god, Huriata, is a reasonably accurate account of ceremonial usages. In early times the Tarascans made offerings of deer meat to their gods; later, human sacrifice was instituted. War prisoners were preferred, and one reason for war was to have sufficient victims. In any event, the presentation of the victim's heart was the choicest possible offering to Huriata.

539 [178] [193] Items of psychological interest include the need to explain natural features of the countryside, as shown in the story of Quiritzícuaro. The change of Candó from a good to a bad priest in the legend of Huanita may refer to defrocked clergymen of post-Conquest times, but most likely it refers to a period of temporary degeneration among the hereditary priestly class during the days of Chief Tariyaran some two hundred years before Conquest times.

539 175 648 In this same vein, the legend of Inchátiro shows the depressed psychic condition of these indigenous people as the result of the Conquest. The dream portion in the same legend reveals the nature

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